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Department Of State Tells Counties To Have New Voting Systems In Place By End Of 2019

Harrisburg, PA – Acting Secretary of State Robert Torres today informed Pennsylvania's counties to have voter-verifiable paper record voting systems selected no later than December 31, 2019, and preferably in place by the November 2019 general election. He also announced the commonwealth will receive nearly \$14 million in federal funding to assist counties with replacement.

"We have been planning for some time to bring Pennsylvania's voting machines up to 21st-century standards of security, auditability and resiliency," Torres said. "The federal assistance could not come at a more opportune moment."

Pennsylvania's allocation of \$13.5 million comes from Congress' recent [appropriation of \\$380 million for election security](#) under the Omnibus Appropriations Act of 2018. The funding is being distributed under provisions of the Help America Vote Act of 2002. Each state's allocation requires a 5-percent state match, bringing Pennsylvania's total funding package to \$14.15 million.

The administration is committed to working with the legislature to help fund these voting system upgrades, including but not limited to the consideration of future year cost-sharing arrangements which could use local, state, and federal dollars.

Last week the department released an Invitation For Bid (IFB) for new voting systems, directing that new systems meet enhanced security and auditability standards. The IFB updated an existing state-negotiated agreement with vendors and can be used by counties to purchase voting systems that meet the department's certification requirements.

"We want to bring about the system upgrades so Pennsylvania voters are voting on the most secure and auditable equipment as promptly and feasibly as possible, while also being supportive of the counties' need to plan and budget for the new systems," Torres said.

The department is also exploring every option to help fund or finance the upgrades, including lease agreements, grant opportunities, state, local, and additional federal appropriations, partnerships, bonds, and more.

To kick off public education about new voting systems on the market, the department plans to hold a vendor demonstration April 26 at the Farm Show complex. The event will provide an opportunity for county and state officials, legislators, the media, and the public to explore the features and options offered by the new machines. Details on the event will be forthcoming.

Counties will be able to choose from among any of the voting systems examined and certified after January 1, 2018, by both the federal Election Assistance Commission and the Secretary of the Commonwealth. To date, one system has been certified, and several others will follow in the summer and fall of 2018. Information regarding the [examination and certification process](#) (PDF) can be found on the department's website. The department will provide extensive support and guidance to the county Boards of Election and voters to ensure a smooth transition to the new systems.

In the meantime, Pennsylvania is employing extensive measures and partnering with federal and state law enforcement agencies to stay one step ahead of any threats to our security and infrastructure, including comprehensive monitoring and assessment of risk, fortification of physical and cyber security, training and resources to counties and partners, and increasing communications at all levels.

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